

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. An image management system, comprising:
2 an image acquisition device;
3 a computer coupled to the image acquisition device, the computer including
4 logic for receiving a diagnostic image from the image acquisition device; and
5 a memory element associated with the computer, where the memory element
6 stores a plurality of electronic signature files;
7 wherein the computer includes logic for associating one of the plurality of
8 electronic signature files with the diagnostic image.
- 1 2. The image management system of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality
2 of electronic signature files corresponds to a signature of a user of the image
3 management system.
- 1 3. The image management system of claim 2, further comprising a client
2 application associated with the computer, where the client application instructs the
3 computer to associate one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the
4 diagnostic image.

1 4. The image management system of claim 3, wherein the client
2 application further comprises:
3 a user interface configured to present to the user of the image management
4 system a plurality of choices from which the user identifies him or herself as the user of
5 the image management system so that the electronic signature file associated with the
6 diagnostic image corresponds to the user of the image management system.

1 5. The image management system of claim 4, where the image acquisition
2 device is an ultrasound diagnostic device.

1 6. The image management system of claim 5, where the electronic
2 signature file is associated with the diagnostic image only after the entry of a password.

1 7. The image management system of claim 1, further comprising:
2 a network configured to couple the image acquisition device to the computer;
3 and
4 a network interface associated with the image acquisition device and the
5 computer, the network interface configured to electronically transfer the diagnostic
6 image over the network.

1 8. A method for applying an electronic signature to a report associated
2 with an image file, the method comprising the steps of:
3 acquiring a diagnostic image using an image acquisition device;
4 forwarding the diagnostic image to a computer;
5 storing a plurality of electronic signature files in a memory associated with a
6 computer; and
7 associating one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the diagnostic
8 image.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein each of the plurality of electronic
2 signature files corresponds to a signature of a user of the computer.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of using a client
2 application to instruct the computer to associate one of the plurality of electronic
3 signature files with the diagnostic image.

1 11. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of presenting to a
2 user of the image management system a plurality of choices from which the user
3 identifies him or herself as the user of the image management system so that the
4 electronic signature file associated with the diagnostic image corresponds to the user
5 of the image management system.

1 12. The method of claim 11, where the image acquisition device is an
2 ultrasound diagnostic device.

1 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of requiring a
2 password prior to associating one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the
3 diagnostic image.

1 14. The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:
2 coupling the image acquisition device to the computer system over a network;
3 and
4 electronically transferring the diagnostic image over the network.

1 15. A computer readable medium having a program for applying an
2 electronic signature to a report associated with an image file, the program comprising
3 logic for performing the steps of:
4 receiving a diagnostic image from an image acquisition device;
5 forwarding the diagnostic image to a computer system,
6 storing a plurality of electronic signature files in a memory associated with a
7 computer; and
8 associating one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the diagnostic
9 image.

1 16. The program of claim 15, wherein each of the plurality of electronic
2 signature files corresponds to a signature of a user of the image management system.

1 17. The program of claim 16, further comprising logic for allowing a client
2 application to instruct the computer to associate one of the plurality of electronic
3 signature files with the diagnostic image.

1 18. The program of claim 17, further comprising logic for presenting to a
2 user of the image management system a plurality of choices from which the user
3 identifies him or herself as the user of the image management system so that the
4 electronic signature file associated with the diagnostic image corresponds to the user
5 of the image management system.

1 19. The program of claim 18, where the image acquisition device is an
2 ultrasound diagnostic device.

1 20. The program of claim 19, further comprising logic for requiring a
2 password prior to associating one of the plurality of electronic signature files with the
3 diagnostic image.

1 21. The program of claim 15, further comprising logic for:
2 coupling the image acquisition device to the computer system over a network;
3 and
4 electronically transferring the diagnostic image over the network.